



NEWS

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CALIFORNIA PREPARES FOR A SENIOR SURGE ON THE ROAD

SACRAMENTO - California's senior population is expected to double in size by 2020. From a traffic safety perspective, this translates to an increase in the number of older drivers, passengers and pedestrians using California's roadways. In addition, there will be a larger number of older adults whose health and other factors will force a transition from driving to a reliance on other methods of transportation to accomplish daily living activities.

"It is imperative that we prepare Californians now for this growing demographic," said California Highway Patrol (CHP) Commissioner Joe Farrow.

In an effort to deal with the increase and safely extend the driving years for mature Californians, a year-long grant totaling nearly \$205,000 has been awarded to the CHP by the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Through September 30, 2009, funds from the **Keeping Everyone Safe (KEYS)** grant will be used by the Older Californian Traffic Safety (OCTS) Task Force to establish the senior driver safety/mobility pilot program within three-select CHP field Divisions. The Divisions chosen, Golden Gate (Bay Area), Southern (Los Angeles Area) and Border (San Diego Area), have the highest concentration of seniors (age 65 and over).

The program, modeled after the CHP's highly successful traffic safety corridor approach, uses a multi-disciplinary, community-based task force within each Division to identify senior population areas where moderate to high levels of collisions involving seniors occur and develop a plan to address this issue. The plan includes a public awareness campaign using a variety of available tools to address older adult traffic safety/mobility issues.

"Through education and awareness presentations, we're hoping to have a positive safety impact on California's senior driver population. This whole program is about safety," added Commissioner Farrow.

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